

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A pinion carrier comprising:

5 a first annular body having an outer surface and an inner surface and a plurality of legs projecting from the circumference of the inner surface and terminating in a flat surface;

10 a second annular body having an outer surface and an inner surface and a plurality of legs projecting from the circumference of the inner surface and terminating on a flat surface; and

15 the flat surfaces of the legs of said first annular body being joined to the flat surface of the respective legs of the second annular body.

2. Method of producing a pinion carrier for

planetary gear assembly comprising the steps of:

20 1) cold forming a first cup-shaped body having an outer surface and an inner surface and a circumferential side wall with a longitudinal central axis and including a plurality of spaced apart legs terminating in flat surfaces;

25 2) cold forming a second cup-shaped body having an outer surface and an inner surface and a circumferential side wall with a longitudinal central axis and including a plurality of spaced apart legs terminating in flat surfaces;

3) causing the first and second bodies to be positioned such that the flat surfaces of the legs

of the respective bodies are in juxtaposed contacting relation; and

4) welding the contacting surfaces of the legs of the bodies together.

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3. The method defined in Claim 2 wherein at least one of the cup-shaped bodies is provided with a centrally formed aperture.

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4. The method defined in claim 3 including the step of joining a torque transfer structure to circumscribe the aperture in one of the cup-shaped bodies or creating a gear/spline as an integral part of at least one of the cup-shaped bodies.

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5. The method defined in claim 4 including the step of forming planetary gear shaft apertures to extend from the outer surface to the inner surface of cup-shaped bodies.

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